



30 March 2009

Caring Together: Greater respect in the workplace

NSW Minister for Health, John Della Bosca, today announced a new four-year \$49.6 million program for a significant culture change program that will improve respect and dignity for patients and staff within the NSW health system.

“The *Caring Culture* program is part of the NSW Government’s *Caring Together: The Health Action Plan for NSW* developed in response to the Garling Report,” the Minister said.

“The program will be underpinned by the principle of mutual respect for patients and colleagues.

“The Garling Report noted the importance of respect in the workplace and the need for proper standards of behaviour,” Mr Della Bosca said.

The program will:

- Foster a culture in which all are treated with respect and dignity;
- Promote better relationships between clinicians and management;
- Strengthen respect between members of the health team;
- Promote a positive culture with no tolerance for bullying or harassment;
- Include training and support for staff; and
- Be backed up by improved procedures for complaints management.

“To support the *Caring Culture* program a grievance advisory service will be established with front line advisors working in each Area Health Service to provide independent, objective advice to affected staff,” Mr Della Bosca said

“Commissioner Garling considered the framework of NSW Health’s policies and procedures on prevention of bullying to be both robust and comprehensive, reflective of best practice and easily accessible.

“The *Caring Culture* program will complement these policies and ensure their effective and consistent application within workplaces across the health system.

“The program will build on existing initiatives that provide more transparent grievance processes and training in interpersonal communication and conflict resolution.

“All staff will participate in the *Caring Culture* program whether they are internationally recognised specialists, porter/cleaners or biomedical engineers,” the Minister said.

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“The success of the *Caring Culture* program will be measured through staff and patient surveys,” the Minister said.

“While there are many pressures in the modern clinical environment, there is no excuse for abuse or disrespect. These behaviours will not be tolerated.

“The focus of the *Caring Together* action plan is to promote a culture in hospitals where the care and treatment of the patient is at the centre of everything we do.

“As the Garling Report points out, NSW has one of the better public health care systems in the developed world but we need to meet the challenges of the future, including a growing and ageing population.

“The strategies being announced today are the result of extensive consultation across the State and from working closely with doctors, nurses and other health staff.

“These initiatives are only the beginning of important changes to continue to deliver the best possible health care and to ensure on-going patient care and safety.

“The full details of the *Caring Together* initiative will be announced today (30 March),” the Minister added.